

## Interview with Thomas D. Bowie

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Labor Series

THOMAS D. BOWIE

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*Q: Good afternoon, this is Jim Shea. We're broadcasting from the apartment of my good friend and former colleague, Tom Bowie. So today is your fiftieth anniversary, is that right? That's great, Tom, congratulations. Tanti auguri.*

BOWIE: Thank you very much, Jim. Actually, it is the 52 anniversary of my entry into service of the Department of State, February 25, 1942. I was kept out of uniform during those war years because of a heart murmur—a certificate of long life they said.

First, I'd like to honor all those Foreign Service “nationals”—locally employed persons—who have served us so well. By mentioning one I might slight others. So I simply recall all those devoted local employees who helped career officers on to higher things, sometimes in skeptical wonderment, but taking genuine pleasure in their progress. These employees were experts in adaptation and survival, yet some laid down their lives for the US government they served. I bow to the ground to honor their devoted contributions and rejoice at every recognition and recompense they receive.

I could go on and tell you about Marseille of my heart where I met my first wife, Margit Koren Ramm Bowie, who died in 1975, the mother of our two children, Charles and Karen.

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She was working for the head of the regional office of the American Red Cross there. I brought her to the ruins of Warsaw, Poland, 3 weeks after our marriage. Having spent part of her childhood and adolescence in France, Spain, and Norway, she was used to being abroad and loved the Foreign Service. She was the mainstay of my life, a “great aid” to me, as one Foreign Service evaluation put it. She fitted into the traditional Foreign Service wife pattern and lived long enough only to ponder over her first glimpses of the sea-changes coming to the Service. In all of our posts Margit was active in women's organizations, from helping the wives plan one in Warsaw, to organizing all sorts of activities along the way. Throughout my 22 years in the field of labor, in one way or another, neither of us ever pretended to be from the American labor movement. We were not; nor had we experienced at first hand the problems of American workers. But we both came to appreciate profoundly what we saw and experienced during those never-to-be forgotten years.

To get ahead of myself for a moment, not long before retiring from the Foreign Service I had the good fortune to meet and marry a very lovely widow who had cared deeply for her late husband, as I had cared deeply for my late wife. Katherine and I have enjoyed the so-called sunset years together, both keeping quite busy.

*Q: How many people were in the Embassy (Madrid), which I understand was your first post, during World War II?*

BOWIE: It a very small group in the Embassy chancery, and there were attached service organizations of much larger dimensions. Perhaps no more than 100 all told, but I am very uncertain of the numbers. The political section was made up of one man. The economic section was bigger, perhaps 5 or 6 of us.

*Q: Who was the Ambassador, Tom?*

BOWIE: Ambassador Carlton Joseph Huntley Hayes, professor of history at Columbia University. The press claimed President Roosevelt had selected him as his ambassador

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to Spain as a gesture to Catholic circles in the United States considered sympathetic to Franco Spain. Of course, sympathy for Franco Spain would be a minority, quite unpopular view. It was vigorously attacked by some part of the US press. Franco Spain was pro-Nazi, no friend of the US. In 1937 Hayes had come to the college I attended and he stayed and lectured for a week. I remember his speaking in a way that struck me as, well, different. The defining moment was when he said "Who knows, maybe democracy will prove to be the purple thread in the tangled skein of history. Who knows?" Very Olympian. That was 4 years before Pearl Harbor, a time when US public opinion was still profoundly disunited over the events looming in Europe and the Far East. Hayes, the champion in Franco Spain of the Allied cause against Nazism and Fascism, no longer was the philosophical historian. The history of our wartime mission to Spain by now shows that he and his top echelon effectively presided for several critical war-time years, especially when the outcome of the war was in doubt, over a series of complicated strategic maneuvers more successful than generally recognized at the time. But the press and public opinion were still sympathetic to the Republican cause. I remember how in one of his telegrams he affirmed "I hold no brief for Franco Spain." On his staff I was one of the "economic warriors", that is, one who worked in the field of economic warfare.

*Q: Tom, I know you came from Minnesota and I believe you went to Carleton College. Right. And was it this Ambassador who stirred up your interest in the Foreign Service?*

BOWIE: No, it was not he. Somehow or other I had always been interested in travel, foreign languages, and in foreign countries. A foundation for international studies was established at Carleton College by the late Frank B. Kellogg, a St. Paul lawyer who became Secretary of State and co-author of the Kellogg-Briand peace pact. So there was an encouragement of the study of international relations at Carleton and I took as many courses as I could the year it was established, my senior year. Also, a French exchange student at Carleton told me about a scholarship available for study in Paris. So, late, late in my senior year I applied for it through the Institute for International Education in New York and got it, just a few weeks before graduation. It was a scholarship paid by the Soci#t#

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des Amis de l'Universit# de Paris for studies in diplomatic history and international law beginning that fall in Paris. I owe Carleton and its faculty very much.

*Q: What year was that, Tom?*

BOWIE: It was 1938-1939. First, I studied French intensively at the Alliance Fran#aise in Paris before enrolling at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales and the 3rd year law courses at the Law Faculty of the University of Paris. We has to take a lot of exams at the end of the year. I remember to this day how much more emphasis they placed on memorization than independent thinking. That school in Paris awarded me a scholarship to study at the Hague Academy of International Law in the Hague, for the summer of 1939. I returned to the US just 10 days before war broke out. The British ocean liner that brought me to Quebec was sunk by a German submarine not long afterward.

I returned to Carleton to work off my college debt. I stayed on as an instructor until we entered the war and I found I was not going to be taken into the military. So 2 months after applying to the State Department I left Carleton and started work in the Division of World Trade Intelligence in the Commerce Department building on 14th street.

*Q: And was French your first language?*

BOWIE: First foreign language. Well, I had picked up a smattering of Swedish from my maternal grandparents' families but I never studied it systematically. It's still there, such as it is.

*Q: So, French was your first?*

BOWIE: Yes, I didn't learn Italian until much later, long after Spanish.

*Q: And did you take the exam for Foreign Service? How did it work at that time?*

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BOWIE: I was hired into what was called the Foreign Service Auxiliary in February 1942 without any examination whatsoever and served as a Junior Economic Analyst for \$2600 per year. It was economic warfare work: assembling information about trading with the enemy and preparing blacklisting recommendations ("The Proclaimed List of Blocked Nationals," and "The Confidential List of Unsatisfactory Consignees"). The pay seemed so fantastically high to me that I whispered it over to the telephone to my family, thinking that the huge salary of \$2600 per year might seem unjustified. I soon learned wartime Washington was more expensive than Northfield, Minnesota

Then, in April 1943 I was sent to the Embassy in Madrid to do the same kind of work. Now comes the examination story. Toward the end of the war notice was circulated that written examinations for entry into the career Foreign Service would be held in various posts throughout the world, including Madrid. I remember studying briefly for them. There were some sample exams from earlier times and I had laid my hands on a couple of books on US history. There really wasn't much time to study. Fifty of us—including staff from the several consulates in Spain—took the exam in Madrid. I think it took at least a couple of days, if not more. Three of us passed. And then I was brought back at the end of my assignment and passed the oral examination on September 27, 1945. Then came Marseille, as I've already mentioned, and after a couple of years I was sent on direct transfer to Rabat, Morocco. I spent less than a year there before returning to the US.

But I was there long enough to have to run the little Consulate alone for a few months during the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. I would quietly see some of the Nationalists and keep in close touch with the French General Residency, staffed by quite a few holdovers from Vichy. First day I was on my own, a nearly hysterical American-protected Moroccan Jew appeared at the Consulate doorstep, threatened with death by an Arab nationalist newspaper for allegedly sending arms to Israel. [The French Protectorate more or less accepted our age-old treaty with the Sultan of Morocco which provided for American protected nationals in Morocco, consular courts and so forth.]

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What to do...Hmm. To meet this man I called in a Moroccan nationalist contact, editor of the newspaper threatening death. We thrashed things out, including my sketching an article in French for the newspaper, all taken from the Sultan's recent speech. When it was over they went out and had orange juice together. I remember seeing lots of French intelligence reports on the incident, casting it in a bad light. I guess that's about it. One of those consular problems you have to solve on the spot. Small beans in today's world. But I was absolutely unprepared for the post with its smoldering Arab problems, and relations with the Residency : No advance briefing, no special training whatsoever, no consultation with the desk, no chance even to read the post report. Just a direct transfer from Europe, maybe part of the perennial power struggle between EUR and AF over colonial policy, maybe just the way things worked sometimes. That was the post where I would have a strong sense of belonging to an invisible chain of Foreign Service people throughout the world, particularly when leaving some social event to decode a telegram in the office, alone, late at night.

Back in the US on consultation I took a Department of Commerce course (it would have been more appropriate to have it before going to Marseille, but never mind, everything can come in handy in our work.) Margit and I were married in Baltimore, Maryland and within a month we went out to Warsaw, Poland. That time, April 1949, there were still more buildings in ruins than standing. Columns of women gathered rubble. The woman at the head of the column, deepest in the rubble, would retrieve one brick, hand it to the women behind her, and then retrieve another brick and again hand it back. Meanwhile, the first brick would be handed along down the column until deposited, one by one, in stacks. The Warsaw Ghetto was a mass of ruins. Plans were under way to rebuild some Polish cities according to the centuries old architectural plans, still preserved. Our stay in Warsaw left tremendous, lasting, impressions. So much physical fear, hunger, and suffering. I could go on for hours. One of the many things we learned was especially salutary: How it feels to be discriminated against.

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At the end of our tour of duty in Warsaw we returned to Washington and from there we were assigned to Milan. I was to be a labor/political reporting officer. That was the beginning of my work in labor. Almost no briefing or preparation. I remember being told by a Personnel officer that I was a guinea-pig: Could labor work be handled by regular Foreign Service Officers? Actually, a Foreign Service colleague, Jack Fuess, had already done that work in Milan. And, indeed, I was to follow him again, as Labor Attach# in Rome, years later. So we were at least two guinea pigs. I sometimes would wonder how the experiment was proceeding.

*Q: What year was that, Tom?*

BOWIE: It was 1951. First week we were there we heard that somebody by the name of Irving Brown, a trade unionist from Washington, was coming through on a United Nations mission to Yugoslavia. We were still living out of packing cases but had Irving over for supper served on a trunk top. It provided as good a chance as any to become acquainted.

Later, after Irving had gone on, some of the very new labor contacts congregated in my office. Chairs had been gathered and the office was quite filled with oh, I can remember Ettore Calvi, Franco Volont#, other faces come to mind, but the rest of the names are gone. At least six or seven of them had come in. Maybe just to look me over in the office. Then the receptionist called me and said there was a Colonel Lonny outside who wanted to see me. I had never heard of any Colonel Lonny. It never occurred to me that it could be Colonel Lane, the Labor Attach# in Rome, whom I had heard of and expected to meet some day. I'll never forget the sharp look in his eyes as he burst into the office. But he at once was pleased to see all his friends. It turned into a great time. Then, the two of us went out and had a good lunch together with plenty of red wine. When we went back to the office and I said, "You know, Colonel Lane, I don't know anything about labor, I don't have anything to teach these people." And he said to me, very encouragingly, "You can learn, can't you?" I have always remembered that. Here was someone I could discuss these labor problems with. I remember going down to Rome filled with the one-sided impressions

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of the industrial north and urging something on Tom Lane. He would reply "Penso oggi; parlo domani." I'll think about it today and talk about it tomorrow. He had lots of things to weigh that I hadn't considered.

*Q: What kind of a guy was he in physical appearance?*

BOWIE: He was above average in height, heavy-set, slow moving, weighing perhaps 200 pounds, in those years. He died of some lung ailment at the age of 67. This was some years before that so I suppose he was around 50 at the time. He had thinning light brown hair, piercing blue eyes, a firm look. Very sympatico. Very simpatico. In fact, Jim, he had a lot of Irish charm.

I doubt that he was ever totally at home in the Embassy atmosphere and setting but he had worked there with great success for many years. By the time I got to Milan in 1951 he was a very well-known figure throughout Italy. He had been sent into Sicily by the American Military Government authorities from North Africa at the time of the landings in southern Italy in 1943, I believe. He later learned with great surprise that one of the colonels selecting him to go there and serve in Military Government was my brother-in-law, the husband of my wife's older sister. So Tom Lane always thought that was quite a coincidence.

*Q: What was his name?*

BOWIE: Henry T. Rowell, professor of classics at Johns Hopkins University. When I asked him about Colonel Lane he said, "Yes, I guess I do remember that name. He was on a list with several other to go in." And then I asked him what made them choose him, he answered, "Oh, I can't remember that..." After retirement Henry became the resident director of the American Academy in Rome. He loved the Italians and knew to deal with them. But he slipped up once when in Military Government in Rome. He was convinced that opera was opera and thought it appropriate to schedule a concert with the famous singer, Beniamino Gigli, who had some kind of Fascist past. There was a huge uproar by



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the Italians. Tom had to be called in to straighten out the situation. So their paths crossed once again.

*Q: And how did you report, Tom?*

BOWIE: Well, the labor reporting officer in Milan wrote various kinds of messages. One was an Office Memorandum (OM) which could be sent directly to the Department, always with copies to Rome; or dispatches as they were called in those days—long formal documents, “The Honorable, The Secretary of State: I have the honor to...”; or airgrams. The latter were devised during the war to save telegram traffic. Draft in telegraphese; send by air pouch: airgram. I used OM's and airgrams. Airgrams for the required reports, including responses to special requests from the Labor Department. We used OM's for various other kinds of reporting.

Soon after the Eisenhower administration came in, in 1953, there was a big RIF (25 percent and more across the board. Some found jobs with temporary programs such as the Refugee Relief Program, but others simply sought work outside the government.) From the overseas perspective the impression was inescapable that there was an aggravated aspect of the outs coming to power and grabbing jobs from the ins. I remember hearing how it was when Hoover came in after the 1928 election: Commercial attach#s were given 30 days to pack up and return to Washington.

In 1953 “cleaning up the mess in Washington and weeding out security risks” made it an especially rich harvest. Some known Mccarthyites were taken into the State Department and carved out careers for themselves. Secretary John Foster Dulles seemed to set the tone when he announced to the assembled staff that he did not intend to defend what he did not know. But to be balanced, when the Democrats came in 1960 after the death of Mccarthyism, many strong personalities had to re-invent the wheel.) Yet, the coming to power in 1953 of the party of which Senator Mccarthy was a member constituted validation or strengthening of his dynamics, and brought more fear and loathing to the hearts of most

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government employees. They had seen too many names besmirched and careers ruined by downright lies and misrepresentation. I do not think any society is exempt from the threat of a repeat of such extremism.

In Rome there was soon a fresh emphasis on a program called “Offshore Procurement.” That meant US military purchases abroad. They were of great interest to a country in need of orders. I had already worked on offshore procurement with Tom Lane's office in Rome. When Mrs. Luce came as Ambassador to Italy under the Eisenhower administration, she announced that no such orders would be approved for Italian firms having a CGIL (Communist-dominated trade union, the biggest union confederation in Italy) majority in their labor force. I looked at that announcement and thought, no, I've got to say something about that. It must have crossed my mind that dissent might be considered uncalled for, unwelcome, even disloyal in these times, but it had to be done. I don't recall agonizing over it and weighing the pros and cons.

Margit and I had talked over Mccarthyism one day as we were driving through northern Italy. I said it really could strike like lightning. The life and career of innocent officers had been ruined, but I at least had an alternative profession—teaching—. Margit, a child of the depression, answered reassuringly: “I've been poor before and can be poor again. We'll be alright anyway.”

I discussed my reaction to the announcement with my boss, who was very sympathetic and said “Go ahead.” He needed no convincing but had lots of questions for me as I was writing. He wanted to understand it clearly. The big thing was to get my comments down straight. When the report was finally ready for my boss's approval he quietly inserted his initials after mine as a drafter. Without any discussion I understood he was certainly not trying to take any drafting credit, but wanted to stand beside me ready to take what came. Those initials closed the door to his possible disavowal of the report if it caused him real trouble.

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*Q: Who was your boss, Tom?*

BOWIE: Paul Tenney, a fine man in the best traditions of our Service. I tried to set forth a closely reasoned dispatch to Washington with copies to Rome, saying that it probably wouldn't be in our interest to withdraw contracts from firms having a CGIL dominated union representation because most of northern Italian firms were then in that situation and many CGIL members were not Communists. Above all, to take away bread and butter from an Italian worker, and threaten their employment, would be the worst thing that could happen to them and their families. It would strongly influence their feelings, but not in favor of US objectives. I felt that such action would inflict needless injury on Italian workers who were not Communists but members of the CGIL. I recalled how the Moody Amendment outlined in detail US foreign policy objectives in the labor field, seeking to strengthen the democratic trade unions and induce workers to join them. But I thought this sanction, this bludgeoning, of Italian workers, more than the CGIL and the Communists, was ill-advised. Counterproductive, to use a term heard more often in Latin America. That's the best I can remember it now, but in a word it took polite but definite issue with the substance—or as it turned out, an unintended implication—of Mrs. Luce's announcement.

Durby Durbrow, the DCM, came up to Milan, had dinner with us. After mystifying our son with slight-of-hand tricks, he then explained the target of the announcement had been Italian management. The aim was not to take away work from Italian workers in the CGIL but rather to pressure Italian management to favor the democratic unions. One of the consequences was that I was asked to go over and interview the FIAT people after the disappointing election returns in their internal commissions elections.

*Q: The people in Turin?*

BOWIE: Yes, I thought this was an interesting development and Tom Lane said that what I had written had been useful. I think they were more than ordinarily willing in the Embassy

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to have a dissident opinion because there was much concern over conformity imposed by the fear of Mccarthyism at that time.

I was also put in charge of the OSP investigations and recommendations for the Embassy's consideration for northern Italy.

*Q: Who was Elbridge Durbrow?*

BOWIE: He was the DCM and later became ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam. I eventually went there as his political counselor.

*Q: In 1952 when you were in Milan I was a student at the University of Perugia and I used to get to Milan quite often. And I traveled out to Sesto San Giovanni...*

BOWIE: Oh yes...

*Q: I used to find the anti-American feeling there to be terrific.*

BOWIE: Yes, there was a lot of Communist propaganda there. It was reinforced by their alliance with the Nenni Socialists and the weight of the CGIL. I used to sit perplexed when commuting by train into town from where we stayed in the summer. The passenger cars on the train and the locomotive and the freight cars were marked "From the US" but that didn't seem to influence the anger and resentment you could sense in the crew and the passengers. We used to wonder what to do about it. I worked very closely with the USIS office in Milan. It seemed as if the Communists had so many more resources than we did even in those fabulous times of our own spending. I used to read carefully their "Quaderno degli Attivisti" published weekly, I think. That edition paid much attention to labor developments in northern Italy. I thought it provided some insight into Communist thinking and, perhaps, their actions at the plant level. But the free trade union leaders had to be angry, too, with lots to criticize. "All that money wasted," complained one of the free trade unionists to me. I would go out to Sesto San Giovanni and I seem to recall spending

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a lot of time at Breda, in addition to Pirelli and Magneti Marelli. Breda had a reputation for being a pretty red state-participation enterprise. (It was a Socialist, Giovanni Mosca, who was later to become a top Socialist leader in the CGIL, eventually visiting the US and quietly seeing AFL-CIO officials, who gave the word on the eve of Liberation for the strike at Breda that developed into a memorable general strike.) Great big plant, first started by an Italian, Ernesto Breda, years before. Oh, they took so much time to draw up the blueprints for the new Settebello train. I was on its inaugural run to Bologna and back. It is still going now, an old but still sleek, stream-lined modern train. And all the managers and workers were so worried about orders, orders, orders. Comesse. We don't have enough orders. Anyway we've got to keep the workers on the rolls. Losing ones job was a family catastrophe. Management lost face by dismissing workers. The hour of lean-ness and mean-ness had not yet struck. Despite all the well-founded criticism of northern Italian managers and enterprise owners in their dealing with the workers, they thought twice before firing workers.

An incident comes back to me. In those times there were no worker cantinas, restaurants with subsidized meals. The workers brought their own food, hooked up their little heaters to a factory electricity outlet to warm up their minestrone, or ate cheese or ham in buns with red wine. I would walk along and smile, [It was extremely rare, if ever, that I gained entry into those plants without management sponsorship] and workers would smile back, sometimes making a friendly gesture. One afternoon a worker at Breda, on the job, was furious about something. He was apparently a skilled worker since he was doing some drilling on a piece of machinery. Something made him madder yet and so he threw down his electric drill with all his might. No one said a word, least of all management. Tantrums were in. I have often thought about that incident, wondering sometimes if it was a gesture against the American. However it was such an isolated event in all the times I was there, that I tend to think it was something else, within the worker. I repeat, I never was aware of direct, personal hostility. But that certainly doesn't mean there weren't great anti-American demonstrations. Something personal, however, did not strike me as characteristically

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Italian. On the other hand, when we were in Poland Poles expressed personal animosity against Americans while in public because they were pressured into doing so. In private it was quite the opposite. But I did not get close to the workers in Milan other than as a US representative. I would go out to the rice fields with the USIS truck and free union representatives. Those poor rice pickers lived in medieval conditions.

To return to the subject of keeping workers on the payroll rather than firing them, there may still be an interesting institution in Italy called the Cassa Integrazione dei Guadagni. It is a fund for supplementing worker wages when they are placed on part-time. Unfortunately, it has been translated by the opaque term of Wage Integration Fund. Wage Supplement Fund would be less mystifying. Labor economists will say it is an income transfer device, a cushion for frictional unemployment, and a means for assuring an immediately available supply of skilled and retrainable labor to employers. Workers may be put on half time, even zero hours, but they are kept on the payroll for a meaningful time, a period often extended by parliamentary decision, their social insurance is maintained, and they are paid a substantial enough fraction of their wages to be able to live. Italian unemployment insurance is a mere pittance. (That makes me think of how Herbert Stein, former economic adviser to President Nixon, quite recently made what he called an “heretical” proposal, namely that economists should begin to consider how to revise current economic models to take better into account our current social problems.)

The “Cassa” — “The Fund”—(actually there are a number of sub-funds applying to different sectors of the economy ) is financed by social insurance contributions and the general treasury. It has worked in Italy for decades, even before World War II. But Italians have a host of devices “combinazioni” that, perhaps after the fashion of Rube Goldberg machines, make their society go. But I digress. What's the next question, my friend?

*Q: Oh, I recall, Tom, that the Socialists, especially under Nenni, were just as fierce in their anti- Americanness as the Communists. Would you care to comment on that?*

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BOWIE: Yes, Yes. Where to begin? There was a Socialist Congress in Milan before we got there in 1951. It would have been instructive to sense what was going on behind that anti-American line and their alliance with the Communists. Did you, too, ever get glimmerings that some Socialists were following the line enunciated by Nenni because they were personally loyal to him? I did, here and there. But at that time their anti-American stance was fierce. That was the harsh fact. Despite their positions, even then, one got the inkling that they did not always think the same as Communists. The Socialist-Communist relationship was not permanently defined by that gross anti-American propaganda. They have a long history. They were frustrated. They were overwhelmed. And in the end—after years had passed, particularly the 1956 Soviet occupation of Hungary—I seem to recall that Nenni was quoted as saying “Ho sbagliato tutto.” And over time they had a fresh beginning. But during our years in Milan their position was hard to distinguish from the Communists. We tended to lump them together indiscriminately.

If I may go ahead a little on the subject of Socialists, which deserves several encyclopedias, I recommend Dan Horowitz's book on Italy as an excellent study. When I was down in Rome as labor attach# some years later, and there was more movement among the Socialists, I used to think that each Socialist was almost a career in itself: Each individual Socialist's evolution in thinking, their psychological change, the things they were going through, their problems.

*Q: Tom, how long did you stay in Milan on your first tour in Italy?*

BOWIE: From 1951 to 1954. But you see, I've digressed and leapt around. Apropos of some of these stories I've recalled, wouldn't you agree, you who know Italy so well in so many ways, that no generalization about Italy is accurate, even this one?

*Q: Did Mrs. Luce come to Milan during the years we are discussing?*

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BOWIE: Yes. First there was Ambassador James C. Dunn, then Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and then Mrs. Luce. Her first visit to Milan was right before the 1953 elections and she delivered a speech to the US Chamber of Commerce containing an observation that if the elections went unfavorably (meaning if the Communists gained), US aid to Italy could be in jeopardy. It was not taken well, perhaps because of the great nationalist sensitivity in northern Italy that has always been there, partly because it was in style to be sensitive to Mrs. Luce's nomination as an Ambassador to Italy. They weren't used to having women ambassadors and the press was full of it. Nevertheless Mrs. Luce succeeded in winning over some popularity. When she arrived on the train that day from Rome she pleased the crowd by waving the back-handed bye bye the Italians do to say "ciao."

Also she won over the Embassy staff on the first staff meeting, according to the toms toms of the day. But to express disapproval of Mrs. Luce's speech to the Chamber of Commerce that evening, the Corriere della Sera printed a picture of Mrs. Luce looking like an angry schoolmarm with her forefinger in the air in exhortation. They didn't appreciate interference in Italian domestic affairs.

*Q: I must say I've heard Bruce Millen on that.*

BOWIE: Yes, but sometimes they depended on our "interference." Our history of liberation and post-war development involved "interference." Graduation is a long process. Not long after Mrs. Luce's visit I remember being flabbergasted to hear that "The Consulate General had given its green light ('nulla osta') to a certain local strike in Milan." I had never done anything quite that stupid. It's interesting because it suggests that dependence was there, if only receding gradually to a tiny speck later on, in the culture of that time. Like a child learning how to walk. How the Italians slalom now.

*Q: Bruce; you know how outspoken he is against Lane. Well, on the tape he wasn't so...*

BOWIE: Maybe this...



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*Q: Of course, Colonel Lane was very close to the Christian Democrats and also the Socialists. Could you tell us a little bit how these organizations were helped.*

BOWIE: Well, the Christian Democratic party was the party after the 1947 elections in Italy, as in Germany. I'm afraid I've neglected relations with the CD organizations in our talk. They occupied much of our attention. Prior to the 1947 elections there had been a great Communist scare that cast a long shadow over Italian politics for some time. ["Verra Baffone..." Big Moustache (Stalin) is coming...] Every possible means was used in American foreign policy to assist the Christian Democratic party organizations and, to a certain extent, other democratic party organizations, to gain strength, to defeat the Communist threat. However, I never had any doubt that the Christian Democrats' share in US assistance more or less equaled their status as the pivotal party. I must tell you I never was actively involved in who, how, what, and why in that activity.

The same is true of the democratic trade unions. Remember, a great deal happened and was decided in the immediate post-war years, and throughout the 1950's. I was Labor Attach# from 1962-1973 and in Milan as labor reporting officer, far from the scene of decision-making, from 1951-54. I remember hearing of the jealousies within the free labor organizations on that score.

The CISL was the largest free trade union and certainly got more support than the UIL. I recall how the UIL had Social Democrats, Republicans and some Socialists among their supporters, under Italo Viglianesi. The CISL was an amalgam of Christian Democrat oriented unions with a smattering of other forces participating, including some Republicans and I guess even some Socialists and Social Democrats. In later years CISL cultivated "autonomy" and strenuously pressed independence from political parties. In earlier years each of the two major the free trade unions would claim that only one democratic union would absorb all the other democratically-oriented workers. That didn't come about. The

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trade union configuration, aside from what now may appear as minor anomalies, reflected the political scene.

The Socialist Party had a statute requiring its members to be active in the CGIL, along with the Communist leadership. Later, when the Socialists and the Social Democrats united in the 1960's for a while there emerged a fairly substantial Socialist segment in the UIL organization. That Socialist requirement was glided over. I wonder whether they have yet amended it, and how. Remember how the Social Democrats had left the Socialist Party in the post-war years in disagreement over that party's alliance with the Communists. They were in effect merely coming back together in the 1960's. But this provided a fertile field for internal strife in the US for years. There was a difference during the post-war years in the US labor movement—rivalry between the AFL and the CIO. They were not unified until around 1952 and after that there was still the difference between UAW leadership and the AFL-CIO. As one US labor leader said to me in a moment of illuminating frankness, “We all have our favorites.” Efforts were made to smooth out those differences: In some countries the AFL had predominance, it was said, and in others, the CIO, or the UAW. And of course in the government we had to bear that in mind.

Sometimes I would be perplexed when someone would come out and castigate the CISL and the AFL on behalf of the CIO or UAW, not to me but in public in speeches to Italian labor representatives. That was something a government representative might regret as undermining a common thrust, but it wasn't always a common thrust and that was the reality. It called for a certain amount of tact in our work. I tried to be fair to both democratic unions.

I remember one time when Mr. Meany was visiting Rome I recommended to him that he see both Storti, head of CISL, and Viglianesi, head of UIL. Storti was having a meeting that both could attend. I didn't press my recommendation to Mr. Meany while he was doing other things in Rome, but the day of the meeting, I was accompanying him over to this meeting. He said “Tom, I told Storti that the American Embassy had recommended that

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Viglianesi attend this meeting and Storti agreed. So I guess he'll be there." I breathed a sigh of relief because I thought it would be a very much more constructive move for Viglianesi to be there. For him to fail to see Viglianesi when he came to Rome would be a needless offense.

I have to smile. I remember interpreting for Mr. Meany at that meeting at CISL and Mr. Meany had his own points to make and his own positions to make clear. Which he could do in various ways. So, when called on to speak, he began : "Brother Storti!" and half growled "Brother Viglianesi!" That said it all. Still it was good he saw them both.

*Q: Could you more or less give us an evaluation of Tom Lane's contribution to the development of the Christian Democrat and Socialist Unions.*

BOWIE: Oh, I think he was a great inspiration. He was also the subject of criticism and jealousy. A kind of lightning rod for a lot of the criticism and policy rivalry I've mentioned above. Given the political context of our relations with Italy, the position of the Christian Democratic party, can you imagine his not having a more generous approach, so to speak, to the Christian Democrat organizations than the Socialist ones? That certainly inspired jealousy, resentment, and criticism on the part of those not benefiting so much from US help I do not think for one moment that Tom Lane created that situation. But it must be remembered that I saw nothing of what he was trying to do until 1951, six years after the end of the war. I do know that he was regarded as a person who loved the Italian workers and Italian people. He had a wide range of contacts. I doubt that any other person there under those circumstances and in the play of forces existing during those early years, and later, could have been able to act much differently. I think it was recognized that he was the right person in the right place at the right time. I give him full marks. But from my point of view I come back to the position that under the circumstances of our policies, which labor recommendations could only influence to a certain degree, and which were almost always more the creature of those political circumstances than their driving force, I doubt that there could have been any different approach then what there was.

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Tom Lane was an Irish Catholic from the AFL Bricklayers' Union, (formerly headed by the Bates, who as a widower married a US Foreign Service secretary, former secretary to the famous Ambassador Jefferson Caffery, who would invite them to dinner at his Grand Hotel residence when the Bates were in Rome, and who had been in the Bisbee riots prior to World War I, fighting against the ideologically motivated IWW and its strikes and riots simply to defend bricklayers' jobs and work. He helped President Roosevelt get Congressional approval for funds to build the Pentagon and complained to Roosevelt when he heard bricks were not to be used to build it. Roosevelt said he never heard of that and promised to "get after the person who thought that up..." Roots...

Also, Mr. Meany made a statement that I always regarded as significant no earlier than 1960 recognizing the value and contribution of the Socialist movement in the world. That helped clear away some old underbrush.

Just like in Vietnam, history will have to make a final judgment on the impact, wisdom, and appropriateness of those policies. But as one looks back 40-50 years, one already sees how 20 - 20 hindsight is so much better than trying to see straight in the hurly burly of the crises of the period. We did the best we could, all of us. Disagreement is an essential part of exploring solutions to given problems. Think how we fumble around over current problems. And history is now passing another verdict on those leading parties of Italian coalitions for so many decades. It doesn't look very favorable right now for either the Christian Democrats or the Socialists, with the revelations of scandals and the destruction of reputations. A whole new ball game. But to come back to your question, Jim, I stand today firmly in grateful recognition of Tom Lane for what he did.

*Q: Did people like Luigi Antonini and Seraphino Romualdi travel to Italy at that time?*

BOWIE: Yes, as the years went by they represented a beautiful tradition, something wonderful that had happened...in the past. I remember how one of the trade union leaders said to me "Each year it seems to us that they become less informed," or words to that

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effect. . . “They understand less and less about what is going on.” What the situation was six months ago on the occasion of their last visit no longer obtains. They might be aware of all that had happened since and what was under way, or they might be informed by some correspondents that may or may not have been accurate. At any rate that was the reaction of one of the trade union leaders that discussed the Italo-American phenomenon with me. I have to say that when I saw some of them, I could see there was a measure of truth in it. On the other hand, I have seen Italian trade unionists accept with minimum graciousness a check from US workers who could perhaps ill afford what they had contributed to their Italian recipients. I noted that in Palermo later in my stay as Labor Attach#. Times change; reactions evolve. I could not believe that the intense post-war Italo-American labor ties would last through another generation. I have not kept track whether I was right or wrong. I doubt it has been maintained as 30-40 years ago. I cannot conclude my comments without emphasizing the great contribution these men and women made in the post-war years.

In that connection I am reminded of a man whose name escapes me, I'm sorry to say. He was born in Lodz, Poland, a leader of textile workers in New York, and did much for Italy in the early years.

*Q: That was Emil Rieve, wasn't it, or...*

BOWIE: No. This one was close to the Social Democrats, rather short and stocky, not Emile Rieve. Anyway, whatever his name is, when Giuseppe Saragat, a Social Democrat, was president of the Republic of Italy he had this man over to Rome and gave him a medal the size of a dishpan. He was so pleased. He showed me the great medal. On getting ready to return to the US he generously tipped all the hotel staff that had served him. And then, because they were aware of what he had done for Italy, they all came out and lined up again to give him a final farewell as he was on the curb waiting for his car. But he looked at them in anxious frustration and asked, “But haven't I already seen you?” And they answered, “No, no, not that. We just wanted to say good bye to you again.” On that note we can leave the subject of Italo-American labor ties.

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*Q: Tom, do you recall much about Giuseppe Di Vittorio?*

BOWIE: No, not directly. He was the head of the CGIL during the years I was in Milan. He died in 1957. Originally a southern farm worker, Di Vittorio never forgot that. He was a gifted leader of men, with a human touch and feeling for the poor that probably weighed more heavily than the strategic aims of theoretical communism. In the years after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia there was such a labor leader, but the Soviets ultimately executed him. He had put trade union concerns before party aims. While it may have been said that Di Vittoprio was no cold Communist theoretician, perhaps even something of a loose cannon in Communist eyes, I never personally became aware of anything other than a militant, charismatic, unchallenged Communist leader. Perhaps those seeing more of him had better informed impressions.

*Q: Di Vittorio was from the south, Apuglia, as I recall.*

BOWIE: Yes.

*Q: He still had a tremendous following in the CGIL, I gather.*

BOWIE: Oh, yes, yes he did and I recall some speculation about why the Communists came to accept someone who wasn't to the party born, so to speak, as the head of the CGIL. Of course it made good sense because he had very great appeal to the "masses." And it wasn't just the farm workers, it was to everybody, all the working people in Italy. Recalling the attacks against Communists leaders by the democratic forces, particularly the democratic unions, in those years, Di Vittorio was something of an invulnerable icon, a towering figure who so transcended his actual political orientation, that he came to stand for what workers thought they wanted. It was very hard for the democratic unions. Di Vittorio was hard to attack.

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*Q: Yes, as I understand it, perhaps I'm wrong, I'm told that the only non-Communist leader who could approach di Vittorio as far as ability was Bruno Buozzi, who of course was assassinated by the Germans before he left Rome.*

BOWIE: I think you're absolutely right. It happened before he could make any contribution to post-war developments. A great tragedy. His picture was in all the democratic trade union offices.

*Q: What kind of a reception would you get as you went around labor circles in Milan at that time?*

BOWIE: Considering the virulent anti-American propaganda and its inroads, I would say quite friendly. The democratic labor leaders were very cordial. But of course, I was very much the US government representative, never pretending to speak on behalf of US labor. It comes back to me now how once Tom Lane and I went out to attend some sort of big demonstration in Milan. Later the same day he told me his free trade union friends had just let him know they had kept us under watch every moment we were at the demonstration, unbeknownst to us. He said they wanted to make sure nothing happened to us.

Time and again I would get a friendly reception when calling on Franco Volont#, head of the CISL metalworkers union, and later Giuseppe Zanzi, who succeeded Volont#. I remember how cold those labor offices were when I went there in the winters. We would sit with our winter coats on. How welcome were the little wet cold cups of hot coffee.

Speaking of clothing, I remember we had a meeting early on in Milan of "productivity experts" from the US textile worker unions. A couple of them and a dozen free trade union leaders. In the Consulate General or the USIS, I forget. The US labor representatives were urging the local manufacture of ready-made clothes, including men's suits. But the Italians couldn't accept the idea of not having made-to-measure suits, even shirts. As it was they were lucky to have one suit, who knows how long it had to last. They said they

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would rather have less than anything ready-made. They couldn't afford to dress as well as they did later, after ready-made clothes became accepted.

Later, when coming up to Milan as Labor Attach# 10-15 years later, particularly during the Vietnam war, I could clearly sense anti-American feelings. For example, when I called on Pier Carniti, then head of the CISL metalworkers union in Milan, I felt an almost glacial atmosphere. I noted and reported that he was a clean desk man and at the time thought that would help him on his career goals. It didn't pay him to be friendly with the American labor attach# at that particular time. He changed when he got to Rome. That reception was a contrast to the outspoken welcome I would receive earlier. And, actually, I believe it contrasted with relations I had with other leaders when visiting in Milan. That particular union was very gung-ho early on for trade union unity.

Certain factions in the unions in the north and elsewhere espoused anti-American positions but usually over certain specific issues. Such questions as trade union unity profoundly divided the free labor unions. Some rival leaders made their progress to power by espousing these minority views and challenging existing leaders. I wish I could remember more clearly examples from my experience there but you remember it is some twenty years since I left Rome and closed that drawer, so to speak.

*Q: Your memory is still very good, Tom. Where were the Communists the strongest? In Lombardia or Piemonte.*

BOWIE: I wish I could remember that. There were the areas you called the white areas that were dominated by the Christian Democrats...

*Q: Emilia Romagna...*

BOWIE: Those were the red areas...Toward the Dolomite, Vicenza, Verona, that is where there had traditionally been strong "white" unions. Socialists were also strong in certain unions there, and there were fewer Communists. In certain places there there were many



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strong Catholic unions, with a long Catholic or “white union” tradition which later blended into the CISL and the ACLI (Associations of Christian Workers). Communists could mount demonstrations just about anywhere. But in the south there was the CD party and its organizations including the trade unions. In the north and in the center the Communists were very strong. They were everywhere. Very few places where they didn't have a strong grip. In those days strength was measured by the extent of strikes they could rally, the support they could get, and how they could transcend the differences between the several unions. They had been seeking that for a long time (“unity of action”). They came close to actual “unity” in the early 1970's after “trade union unity” had been a watch word for some years. I remember attending a meeting that a Soviet labor representative assigned to the Soviet Embassy attended. He had little to say except “L'unita sindacale.” That Russian accent echoed in my ears for a long time. Despite the many natural and forced trends to labor unity at the time, the Communists overplayed their hand in 1971 and 1972 when actually putting down on paper the plans for the unified organization with the free union leaders. How the democratic leaders backtracked and pretended. I was surprised at the number of people coming to the office. They feared a repeat of 1945. Political leaders began to sound warnings. It took the CISL and UIL metalworkers unions years to become untangled.

*Q: They [the Communists] were particularly strong in the Alfa Romeo as I recall.*

BOWIE: Yes, yes. Although I remember going through Alfa Romeo in Milan with some trade unionists and having a reasonably nice reception. I didn't find that CGIL people as individuals felt called on to make a hostile demonstration, as I remember.

*Q: And how about FIAT.*

BOWIE: Well, that's another story. Of course, harking back to 1953, the FIAT had some very bad results in their local plant elections. They got a dressing down from Mrs. Luce and later they produced more favorable results, shall we say.

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But those Communist dominated unions in the north have a fascinating tradition. There is the Socialist tradition as well and also that of the CISL and UIL unions. The Communist tradition was very strong there. Piedmont and the north have been especially fascinating for researchers from all over. Over the years some of the research I saw would perplex me. Some researchers seemed to have adopted a "CGIL point of view" without acknowledging it. That was part of the ideological-political battle in which the far left had its own vocabulary, buzz words, and arresting allies. (As early as the 1960's worker priests had joined the CGIL.) When I saw these words in serious studies I would be suspicious of their orientation or as we say today their "hidden agenda." Particularly when the writer would mention only the CGIL, would refer to "the labor union," and would ignore or dismiss the ongoing struggle within the Italian labor movement between free trade unions and Communist dominated ones, and the differences within the CGIL. Once again I point to Dan Horowitz' work as outstandingly sound and utterly praiseworthy in all respects.

The free unions in effect were conducting an effort to prevent the Communist-dominated majority unions from prevailing or taking over entirely. That work of the democratic trade unions went on over a long period of time. Over a period of immense economic and social change and challenge, when they had to fight their own people in the government all too often, somewhat like in the US.

*Q: There was a very strong anti-clerical feeling there, as I recall.*

BOWIE: Yes, very strong and deep. There was a dependable knee-jerk reaction. Maybe it has diminished over time. I think anti-clericalism is a whole encyclopedia to be discussed in terms of all of Italy. It could be invoked against any CISL trade union anywhere and any time, despite their immense strides over the years to autonomy and independence. These democratic trade unions had well established their credentials as valid representatives of the workers, often showing up the Communists as not being free from party political considerations.

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*Q: Tom, in connection with affairs within the Consulate General in Milan and also in the Embassy in Rome, how did the regular FSO's regard labor officers?*

BOWIE: Well, you know I'm not the best person to answer that because I was a regular foreign service officer brought to do that work, as you can see from our conversation. But I can tell you when I was sent to Paris I saw a real difference right away. I had been Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs in Saigon and then after going to the Army war college was sent to Paris as labor attach#. Shortly after I arrived and Dan was showing me the ropes, somebody from another organization came up to him and asked indignantly "When is this garbage strike going to be over?" As if Dan were somehow responsible for it. And I could tell the difference. Your standing as a political officer was the same no matter who you were or what your career experience was, so long as you did your work effectively. The labor attach# just didn't come through like that. I got the feeling some officers in the Embassy didn't quite know what to make of labor officers, and the prevalent anti-labor views in the US were broadly shared by individuals in the Foreign Service. "Your Mr. Meany..."

Fortunately for me, the DCM in Paris was an old-time Foreign Service friend—from Warsaw days. It was nice to know he was there.

Some high-ranking FSO's knew perfectly well what to make of the labor function. That should be emphasized. They worked very effectively with it. I'm not going to name names because I might be unfair in leaving out some sterling characters but I have to say that some of the most traditional foreign service officers were the most supportive and the most interested in the labor program.

When I came to Rome in 1962 there was a great deal of dissension over the desirability of the Italians' forming a center-left government, taking the Socialists into the government. The labor aspect was particularly acute because the Socialists had left the question of trade union affiliation of their members unchanged; labor leaders in the Socialist party

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would remain in the CGIL. Well, I remember thinking that as far as I could see that was an unresolved problem and we were just going to have to recognize that it was going to be there. The international relations department of the AFL-CIO told me the center-left formula was “rubbish.” I had been in the economic section in Paris and the DCM, the minister, in Rome, said that they proposed to put me in the political section in Rome. I said that wherever the labor attach# was, whether in the economic section or in the political section or reporting directly to the DCM and Ambassador, I thought the work would be pretty much the same. Of course I would be glad to go wherever they put me. But I had to say that I was going to be the bearer of bad and contradictory news about the center left as far as the labor situation was concerned. There was a possibility that that could be washed out if it were filtered through the political section, obviously in favor of the center left as a political solution. So, I wondered about that before we even got started. In a couple of weeks he told me I should report directly to the DCM and Ambassador but “if you don't get along with the political section, it will be your fault.”

That was fair enough and so I tried very hard, using techniques of close consultation and occasional joint drafting. I also was careful not to tread on the vested turf interests of the political people. But there were also pitfalls with some economic specialists who occasionally might be disapproving and complain about my reports, although they would be cleared through the economic section, political section, and the Ambassador. This was during times when the economic policies of the Italian government were being attacked and perhaps sometimes slightly attenuated by local trade union forces and the economic agencies of the US government were especially sensitive. Sometimes, too, congressional delegations would have a special axe to grind over interpretation of local labor statistics. I remember how they seemed to require a lot of explanation. I'm sure I'm not adding anything new, but merely adding a bit of color to the experience we're discussing. Where there were friendly personal relationships and where trust and understanding had developed substantive questions were easier. These varied with the change in individuals throughout my long stay in Rome.

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In general the labor function was more appreciated when you could do something helpful, whether for the business people calling having labor problems of one kind or another, the military, and so on. Once there was a huge general strike throughout the whole province of Leghorn over dismissals of local employees of the US military base there. The military called the Ambassador. He and the DCM called me in. I saw that it was the opening steps of the procedure that offended practically all the Italians. What to do? Well, the Ambassador and DCM were the kind of persons who would listen. My idea was that the concept of a fresh start might help things. Tomorrow would be the opening step instead of today. I remember to this day throwing around the imperfect subjunctive in talking with the labor representatives involved. They bought it. The Ambassador persuaded the military. It worked. I suppose it also helped the stature of the labor function.

But I must cut matters short and not begin talking about my boo-boos. We'll draw a veil of charity over them. Maybe some of these problems are eliminated when the labor officer has other reporting responsibilities and is operating cheek-by-jowl in a smaller and close-knit staff.

*Q: How long were you in Paris?*

BOWIE: Two years.

*Q: I see. And how was the feeling in let's say with your contacts with the French trade unionists.*

BOWIE: They were very profitable. I dealt with all the non-Communist trade unions. But you remember I was sent there without a lot of preparation so I was trained on the job as labor attach# in Paris which was a great contrast to the experience of my predecessor, Dan Horowitz, who thank goodness stayed on for a good long time to help me get my feet wet.

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Q: *Ah, . . .*

BOWIE: I had the advantage of speaking French well, and having gone to school in France so there was a certain entr#e there. And then I had those good contacts whom Dan took great care for me become acquainted with before he left. I had a whole array of contacts not only in the labor movement but in the employer associations and journalists. The biggest thing that happened there was the uprising in Algeria and that was a great crisis.

It is interesting how the Force Ouvri#re, the French UIL, to facilitate identification, which was definitely primarily Socialist oriented, was the closest to the AFL-CIO while the Christian oriented union was the one the CIO —UAW—was greatly interested in. But that wasn't a great problem. It was really in Italy where those differences were more marked. There were a couple of secretaries general of the then CFTC. One was Maurice Bouladoux. He was a somewhat touchy person and would take offense rather easily. I remember accompanying him to the airport when he and one of his colleagues was going to the US on a visitors grant. And the airplane was a little late and he was already feeling kind of negative and he said “#a commence mal. . . “ (It's starting out badly. . . ) I always remember that. It became a kind of family saying in our own family. But Eugene Descamps was the second secretary general. One of his parents was a Socialist and one was a Christian union member. And he's dead now I got to know him well and when I left he gave me a book with his calling card saying ,”In the name of the Confederation and en t#moignage personnel d'une f#conde collaboration et d'une profonde sympathie.” I was pleased with that. No value to that gift, just treasured words.

Q: *And after Paris, Tom, you went straight to Rome and you had your great years in Rome.*

BOWIE: Well, they were years of effort and learning and I think I learned more about being a labor attach# in Rome. No doubt our staying there for so long was perhaps somewhat

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stultifying career-wise, but I have no complaints on that score. I remember saying to one of the four Ambassadors I served under that it was in my interests to be transferred. He said, "Yes, it is in your interests to be transferred but it's in the government's interest to keep you. So what could you say? That was Graham Martin. I want to honor his memory.

*Q: And Martin, how long was Martin in Rome?*

BOWIE: I suppose around a couple of years. Then he came back and was sent to Saigon.

*Q: And at that time was Storti head of CISL.*

BOWIE: He was just giving it up then. I worked with Storti all the time I was there. I knew of Marini when he was a young comer.

*Q: How was Storti to work with?*

BOWIE: No problem, as they say today. He was not a man that you could deal with on a very relaxed and friendly basis, but intellectually very decent to work with and very honest. I got to be friends on an entirely different basis with his deputy, Dionigi Coppo, we were friends and he found time to talk more relaxedly. I kept in touch with Coppo for a long time. The last time I was in Rome briefly I was busy and did not see Storti until we met at a meeting. He "reproved me" for not calling on him earlier. By that time he had of course withdrawn from trade union activity.

*Q: So that's what he said.*

BOWIE: Yes. That was just pro-forma. Things had changed. I was no longer an official contact. I accepted the fact that throughout my stay in Rome the free trade unionists had graduated from their feeling of dependency on the US. I was no Tom Lane and a man like Storti had to maintain his distance and utter freedom of orientation. Their US labor friends came over and criticized them from time to time, especially for actions in the international labor field. (Sometimes more than I thought necessary: One top leader, a delegate to a

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CISL congress, showed me his speech and asked what I thought of it. I said I thought it was a bit heavy. His Italian labor friends were already aware of the dangers he was stressing. He said he knew that, too, but it was “domestic politics” that made him do it.)

*Q: And who was the head of the UIL at that time?*

BOWIE: Italo Viglianesi, and then Georgio Benvenuto took over. Come to think of it, I believe there was a Republican who headed UIL for awhile. But I believe that was before Georgio Benvenuto took over. He wanted to be sure he was well and favorably known to the Americans. And he was. It was rather long before he even became head of the metalworkers in UIL. He was a fine person. These Italians are very decent people doing a very difficult job. One has to admire what they were working for and all they are trying to do. I wasn't aware of any great corruption among the people I knew.

*Q: No, that has always been my feeling too. All I can say is that they took advantage of the perks but nothing more.*

BOWIE: Right. Italo Viglianesi was accused widely of enriching himself. They called him “Migliardese” instead of Viglianesi, in some circles.

*Q: Oh, yes?*

BOWIE: He “lives like a Nabob,” they used to say. His apartment was so luxurious, and so forth.

*Q: Where was Storti from? Milano?*

BOWIE: No, he's from south of Rome.

*Q: Oh is he?*

BOWIE: Yes.



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*Q: Because I know that Benvenuto is from Frosinone.*

BOWIE: Yes, that's it. Storti is not very far from there. I just can't remember the name. Somewhere. . . Avellino I think it might be. But I don't now recall much about Storti's background: a right-hand man to the preceding head of CISL, Giulio Pastore.

Giulio Pastore could not be called a charismatic leader. He was bespectacled, slightly owlish, yet a leader of great personality and drive. One of his contributions, with US assistance in the early years, was the creation of a really fine training school in Fiesole, near Florence, for young CISL trade unionists. So CISL has had trained cadres of great independence and initiative. Young lions coming roaring out of their den in Fiesole. I used to go up there and give talks, also to the summer school in the Dolomites.

To return to Benvenuto, I think Benvenuto traveled throughout Italy when growing up because his father was an admiral. And I don't know whether Storti had, for instance, the same education as Benvenuto, although he appeared to be educated. All these trade union leaders in Italy seem, Socialists and Communists as well, to be dapper, well-spoken, well-dressed.

*Q: Yes. Benvenuto grew up in Pola.*

BOWIE: Yes. He was there during the war with his father, I think.

*Q: His father was assigned there during the war as an officer in the Italian navy.*

BOWIE: Yes.

*Q: I must say that Benvenuto never told me that his father retired as an admiral. I learned that from other people. Like you, I always impressed by caliber of the Italian labor leaders.*

BOWIE: Yes, and then there is always something special to consider in Italy. I'm thinking of one man whom I spent a great deal of time on. Elio Capodaglio. He was a Socialist in

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the CGIL. He wanted to talk with an American. So he invited me out to supper one time. And he said "You're the first American I've talked with since 1945 when I had a good friend in the American army. Before I knew him I thought Monopoly was the name of a town in Italy. He taught me more. He came from Chicago."

Capodaglio finally got disillusioned with the situation in the CGIL and got a government job working in one of the government agencies. One Socialist CGIL leader, I can't remember which one, Oh yes, Fernando Montagnani, I think that's how he spelled his name, told me about his trip to Moscow with that CGIL Communist leader who retired just about the time you got there. What was his name...

*Q: That was ... Luciano...*

BOWIE: Luciano...not Pavarotti...Lama! Luciano Lama. Very good presence. Everybody liked him. A "secret friend" to many on the Roman scene.

*Q: He was very anxious to speak to Americans.*

BOWIE: In your years, yes.

*Q: I was only there two months before he stepped down. He would come over and speak to me. At every function he would come over and speak to me. Then, we had, I don't know if you knew Ottaviano del Turco.*

BOWIE: I know of him. I never did get to see him. But I understand he has been very great friends with Embassy officers. I think he cultivated the Embassy.

It was interesting about Lama. I used to worry about his Socialist side-kick. Because Lama would always go to seminars and study and this Socialist never had any opportunity to study that way and to be trained and to keep up. I never felt he could really argue back in a detailed and pointed way with Lama over particular issues. Anyway they went to Moscow to explain the CGIL position on the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Remember

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their glitch on the invasion of Czechoslovakia? And the Soviet labor leader, I think it was Shelepin, summoned them, both Luciano Lama and Fernando Montagnani, to Moscow. Montagnani later described to me his experience at that meeting in Moscow with Lama and the Soviets. I remember writing it up. Shelepin berated them oh, he berated them for letting down the Soviet Union over Czechoslovakia. He wiped up the floor with them and then he slammed the door on them and kept them isolated in a waiting room for seven hours. And this Socialist friend of mine said Lama's face was ashen: "And he looked at me and said 'Do you think we're arrested?'" I thought boy, they must be bound together by this experience. The Communist isn't any more loyal than the Socialist to the Soviet cause in this moment of truth. (I am of course relying on what the Socialist said...) And then when you study the relations of the Italian Communist party and the CGIL with the Soviets, to the extent that we can find things out, I think they must sometimes have been a great big pain in the neck to the Soviets, too.

*Q: I would certainly agree.*

BOWIE: Maybe we didn't know that well enough.

*Q: After your years in Rome, Tom, you returned here to the Department.*

BOWIE: That's right, I returned to the Department and worked with Dale Good for four years and then retired. And lived happily ever after. But it was a wonderful experience. I want to record my affect, respect and gratitude to Dale and Lois Good. They were a fine support during my late wife's last illness, and on every occasion. Dale was a great officer, talented, reflective, very devoted to his labor speciality. We worked together in close harmony in that position. In addition to all my years, from 1960 to 1977 as labor attach#, and in Milan from 1951 to 1954; there was also, in 1955, after I had a year's study of Soviet economics at Cornell, an assignment to that same job Herb Weiner later had, working with Otis Mulliken on ILO affairs in the Department of State's Office of

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International and Economic and Social Affairs of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

*Q: Could you tell us a little about Otis Mulliken?*

BOWIE: Oh, that's another person for whom I have great admiration. A great deal of admiration. A personal friend, and his wife, Jean, too. Both are now gone. She worked in the Department, too. Otis Emery Mulliken was a New Englander, his wife came from Texas, via the Ecole Libres des Sciences Politiques in Paris, by the way. I don't know what his labor background was. I suppose it was an academic interest along with a concern for social problems that was quite widespread in his time of growing up.

He came to Washington in the 1930's, I believe. Back in the days after World War II he was head of the Division of International Health, Labor and Social Affairs. I think it must have been a very important responsibility. From Otis's remarks I gathered that something had happened in his relationship with the trade unions and he was removed from that position. He said "I sat for a week at my desk with nothing coming across it and I had a chance to think about what was the most important thing that I wanted to do with my career. I decided that the work I was doing and the work I could do in this field was what I really wanted to do so I would stick to it." Which he did.

Otis was a very highly respected person. For his intellectual gifts, his honesty, his shrewd ability to put points across. In later years I believe he had regained the respect and confidence of the labor movement. No doubt they were aware of what had happened years before; perhaps not all the details. I don't know for sure. But Otis had a very good way of working in the Washington context. He knew all the interdepartmental ins and outs and he had a way that I thought very effective. He wouldn't immediately reveal his opposition to a proposal but would just say to the person who had suggested that we should do so and so "Now just suppose that we do so and so, and then of course such and such will be bound to happen, and so forth, and all of a sudden the position would

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be demolished. That's a simplified version. You could see that the people in the Labor Department respected him highly. And those from outside, from other agencies or offices for example, HEW (The former Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) also held him in high regard. A fine mentality, honest person. Very good man. I learned a lot from him.

*Q: As I recall he was probably the person most responsible for Dan Horowitz' going to Santiago in 1943 as our first labor attach#. BOWIE: Oh, I didn't know that. He certainly chose well.*

*Q: And then he also gave great backing to John Fishburn who was going to Buenos Aires at that time.*

BOWIE: Yes, they were friends. I remember Otis called him up one time and said "Hey John, clear this."

*Q: Laughter.*

BOWIE: I thought it would be wonderful to be able to call someone else like that and say "Hey, clear this!"

*Q: You want to comment on the late Jim Taylor.*

BOWIE: Oh yes. I remember Jim from way back, the first time I had anything to do with labor work, maybe even from earlier posts, before undertaking labor reporting officially. Back in the Labor Department Jim Taylor had a way of singling out such reports for special commendation, to be sent to the field for routing to the drafting officer, sometimes with a congratulatory note from the boss, and to be placed in ones personnel file. He seemed to nurture young labor reporting officers. It helped in several ways: It encouraged good reporting and identified possibly useful officers for future assignments. He used to like to talk and speculate on things. I think in later years, when he was responsible for high-

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level prompt administrative and management decisions, perhaps that became a little shortcoming. He saw the other side of the question, liked to talk about it. All my various contacts with him throughout the years have been friendly and constructive. He was a fine person to work with.

*Q: When George Meany came to Italy quite often while you were there.*

BOWIE: Both Paris and Rome. I remember I'm always grateful to Harry Weiss of the Labor Department who went out of his way to give me some good advice. He said that Mr. Meany was coming in on a certain ship and it would be a good idea if I went up, met him and his party, and accompanied them to Paris.

I can't close without mentioning Phil Delaney who was, I thought, very devoted to his crew of labor officers. He did the very best he could for all of us. He used to call me "The Pope" because I was in Rome so long, or "Counselor" because I had once written him that the title didn't mean as much as getting the job done. He didn't let me forget that. Phil was very proud of the fact that Mr. Averell Harriman had written in his efficiency report that Delaney in his work unfailingly kept the best interests of the United States in mind.

Of course there has been that built-in rivalry between the head of S/IL and the Labor Department.

*Q: And then there was the fact that Phil Delaney was considered to be from the AFL and George Weaver from the CIO.*

BOWIE: Yes. That was too bad.

*Q: Well, thank you very much Tom. This has been great. We'll just take a break in the action. Right now.*

BOWIE: OK. Thanks for listening.

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End of interview